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Welcome Back Migrants

Telegram photos by DM Stanfield

Adrian's Alex Martinez, 4, took advantage of free balloons Sunday at the Welcome Back Migrants Festival on State Street between Beecher and Summit Streets.

Celebration marked by large crowd, confrontation

From staff reports

ADRIAN — The first local celebration of Hispanic immigrants to be staged in Adrian in about 15 years drew a good-sized crowd, but not everyone in the Beecher and State Street neighborhood was happy.

The block party was organized by area Hispanic businesses to help make the community more aware of the migrants' impact on the local economy and culture. There was music, prizes, food, games for the children and moonwalks.

The event was sponsored by more than 30 Hispanic businesses in Adrian, according to co-organizer Charlie Ojeda, owner of Dos Hermanos market.

Adrian police were called to the area shortly after 3:30 p.m. following an incident involving a pickup driven by a nearby resident.

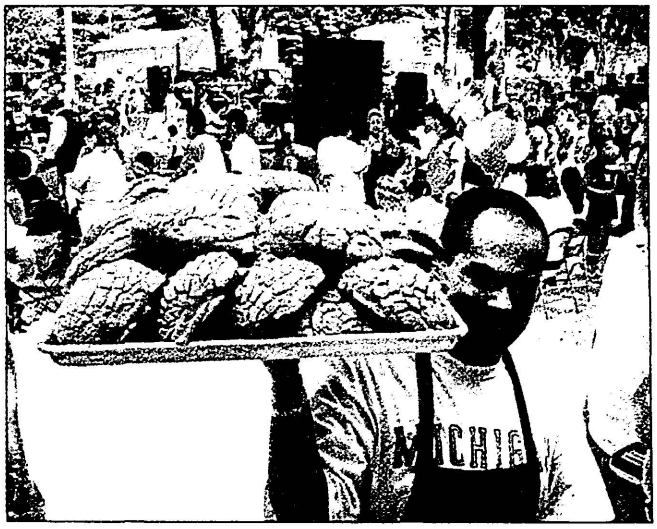
According to a witness, the truck's driver accelerated while moving through the crowd toward his driveway, which had been cordoned off by festival organizers. An exchange followed between Ojeda and the driver, identified as Brian Baker.

Baker said he was upset that organizers had not contacted him before the event.

"If this is a block party, shouldn't it include the people from the block? I don't see any of my neighbors over there," Baker said.

"All the neighbors cooperated and wished us well," said Ojeda, who told police he did not want to press charges. "We went around the neighborhood asking people if they would allow a block party. This individual did not respond."

Another neighbor, Tom Stoner, said he was not notified of the party in advance and said the loud music disrupted his plans for the day.



Gustavo Hurtado carries a tray of sweet Mexican bread to partygoers.

State Street resident and property owner Brian Baker watches Sunday's festivities. Baker said, "I would feel differently, if they had told me there was going to be a party. I would have planned not to be here. Now I'm stuck here until 6 (p.m.) and the music is rattling — shaking my windows. My wife is pregnant with our first baby. We don't need this."